NEWS FROM COLOMBIA, SOUTH AMERICA

Here are parts of two letters received from a new member in Colombia, South America.

Dear Sir,

Thanks a lot for your letter of the 21st in response to my questions regarding hibiscus, the society etc. etc. Naturally, I suppose you might be interested first hand in a bit of information concerning location, climate, facilities, interests and aims (with plants). I will try to fill you in a bit.

This plant "Project" of ours was begun a few years ago as a hobby. It is an overgrown, or outgrown hobby. We begun with the importation of vanda orchids from Hawaii, var. Miss Agnes Joaquin for cut flowers. This went off nicely, then I was severely bitten by the croton bug. This resulted in our attaining what we believe, or like to believe at least, one of the finest collections in Colombia, some say in Latin America. We became infested with the anthurium virus and came up with about 5,000 hybrids, mostly all from Brazilian and European seeds. Our anthurium success can be condensed, almost into one sentence. We grew them, we moved them (to our other place) we lost them mostly!!! We became so deeply involved (enthused) that we imported directly from Japan a couple to do the gardening.

(next page)

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COLOMBIA (Cont'd)

Our mailing address is Barranquilla, on the north coast but actually we live several hundred miles south of this coastal city. We live, actually, in the jungle, right on the Colombian-Venezuelan border, about 100 miles north of the city of Cucuta. I earn a living such as it is, by giving my services to an American Oil company, the largest oil producer in Colombia, in the form of a technical supervisor. I have been in this area for almost 20 years. The area originally was pure jungle, infested by the Motilone Indians who, believe it or not, still use bows and arrows and take pot shots, some fatal, at our oilfield workers.

Climate is tropical, days in the mid nineties, nights about 80-85. Rainfall about .5 inches daily with exception of about 3 months, December to March. Altitude about 150 feet. We live in a huge valley surrounded by about 5-6 thousand foot mountains.

As to our being "nuts" this is a compliment. One who will "baby sit" with his philodendrons in the night to catch their fertile period, one who will keep the refrigerator stuffed full with drying seeds, pollen, anthurium berries, etc., one who will pollinate, graft, plant and transplant in all his spare minutes is a NUT, but definitely don't we enjoy ourselves? I do. (next page)

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